

A Bit Of Sweden, France, And Japan Comes To Brevard

Freshman Torgerd Villemo Cecilia Hedenlo comes to Brevard College from Sweden; she prefers to be called Cecilia. Her father, Joe, is a newspaper reporter in their town of Oskarshamn and Mrs. Hedenlo, that's Hed' - en - lo, is a typesetter for the paper, although she is also trained as an electrical engineer. Oskarshamn means literally Oscar's Dock and is a seaside town of about 13,000 on the Baltic about thirty miles southeast of Stockholm.

At age seven Cecilia entered the town's riding school. By eleven she had a horse of her own and it wasn't long before she was teaching beginners at the school. Now an accomplished equestrian, she was thrilled on the day in 1971 when, upon completing their course for riding instructors, she was given a summer job at the famed Stromsholm. That is "the very highest place for horses in Sweden," explained a letter received last summer by Brevard College President, Robert A. Davis, from the academy's chief administrator. For centuries Stromsholm has been the training school for royal and military horses and is now Sweden's center for equestrian training and competition. The letter went on to tell that Miss Hedenlo had "taken care of the sick (horses) in a manner worth imitation." She also did ordinary work in the stables, looked after the free horses on pasturage and took special part in training the three-year-olds in jumping and dressage, "a work she did with great honor." The following summer Cecilia graduated to a more prestigious position as instructor at the Riding School at Grums.

Then, three years ago Miss Hedenlo became interested through a book she acquired in a particular convalescent hospital in England where the treatment of patients includes twice weekly healing prayer services. She wrote and obtained work there as a member of the domestic staff and spent the next six months at the Dorothy Kerin Trust in Kent. She remembers that time with great fondness although the work was very arduous.

The Swedish grundskola, or ground school, provides a nine year educational foundation including most of the math and science courses taught here in high school. With that background Cecilia went next, in the fall of 1973, to the city of Sarons Dal in Norway at the Bibel og Misjonsinstitut to prepare for evangelistic service.

"The thirty-five students there were just like a big family", recalls Cecilia, and an hour was set aside for group prayer each day. At the end of the school year she went with three Norwegian classmates as a missionary team to a French speaking section of Belgium.

Already speaking French, Norwegian and English quite well, Miss Hedenlo is concentrating further this year on languages taking French, English and Spanish. Later perhaps she will take courses for a nursing career and now, of course, she is taking Horseback Riding. At Brevard College she is a Bishop Ole Borgen Scholar.

Christine Vizu Gomez and Anne Bernadette Vizu are sisters at Brevard College from Paris, France. Christine is in her second year at Brevard and Anne is an entering freshman. Mr. and Mrs. Gomez came to North Carolina when husband Raul was transferred by the Bendix Corporation to the NASA tracking station at Rosman in 1973.

Christine and Anne's father, Rene Vizu, is a sales manager for Air France. As the girls were growing up their father's work took the family from place to place. That explains why Christine happened to finish high school at the Lycee Moderne et Technique at Tananarive, Madagascar. Christine and Raul met there in 1969, were married two years later, and remained in Madagascar until they moved to Brevard. Earlier the Vizu family had lived for a time in the Congo.

Christine now feels very firmly attached to Brevard and North Carolina. She visited her parents in Paris last summer but is glad to be home again and resuming her work at the College toward her goal of becoming a systems analyst.

Anne Bernadette Vizu graduated from high school in France just this past spring. She came to the United States and Brevard with her sister on the latter's return from vacationing in Paris in June. Mademoiselle Vizu will stay with Mr. and Mrs. Gomez at their home in Brevard and attend Brevard College as a day student. In high school, she studied English as a foreign language and in her spare time took just about every course in First Aid offered young people in France by La Croix-Rouge. She put the knowledge to work as a full-time volunteer member of the rescue squad of her community, Vitry-sur-Seine, which is about four miles south of Paris.



Four Brevard College coeds were hosted at a luncheon meeting recently by the Brevard Rotary Club in the Rutherford Room of the A.G. Myers Dining Hall at Brevard College. Picture Above, left to right, College

President Dr. Robert A. Davis, Christine Vizu Gomez of France, Cecilia Hedenlo from Sweden, Anne Vizu, also from France, Noriko Kawanami of Japan, and Dean of the College, Dr. Branson L. Thurston.

Japanese Miss Noriko Kawanami is a returning sophomore at Brevard College. The Japanese symbol for "Nori", she softly explains, has had a meaning which describes the neatness of threads in a finely woven cloth and "ko" means child. "I guess my parents expected me to be a neat child." She goes on to tell that about two hundred years ago the government in Japan required all of its citizens to take family names. She believes her ancestors must have lived near a river for "Kawanami" translates as "a big wave in the river." "A little ripple" might better describe petite Noriko.

Growing up, Noriko loved to play basketball and especially enjoyed being a member of the student council of her junior high school. In high school she took English but really didn't like it until she discovered she could translate rock music for her friends. That was the spark and she went on to take all of the English courses offered in high school and as she continued into the local women's junior college.

During Noriko's first year in the Japanese junior college she tried her hand at drama. In her first role she played an English lord; the girls did all of the parts.

She doesn't recall the title but it seems the plot thickened around a certain English lady who lost her fan in the home of a gentleman. The next year Miss Kawanami directed the production, The Doll's House, and recalls hours and hours of practice each day all during the summer vacation to prepare the cast. She quickly adds that it was very much fun.

Wanting badly to come to college in the United States but feeling she must not burden her parents more for her education, Noriko kept her plans secret and took a job in the office of a food importing company. For a year she saved every yen and earned extra money evenings giving lessons in English to neighbor children. "I wasn't really very good but I taught them common words and songs like Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and their parents were quite pleased." Finally, on the excuse of seeing the city of Sasebo, she journeyed there by train for college entrance exams. An American teacher at her school had suggested his home state of North Carolina as being much like Japan and she thought the state's name to be beautiful. In a Japanese book she found, among others, Brevard College was listed as a very good and small

college, just what she wanted. After much correspondence and being accepted, she was able to announce her intentions to her happy parents.

"Yes, I was very homesick here at first, but not for long. I was worried about eating strange foods but it was no problem, except that I ate too much." It seems that her mother always told her that it was not polite to leave something on the plate. That became a problem when she piled her tray high with all the interesting selections. Later she had to learn to take only a little of each.

Last school year Miss Kawanami was invited to join the family of Brevard College Professor Keith Lathrop for trips to Florida, New York City and Washington, D.C. And in the summer she visited American friends in Tennessee where she learned to water ski, "at least to stay up long enough to have a picture taken to send to her friends back in Japan." Now she longs to see more of America and hopes to be able to remain and work here for about two years after graduation before returning to her family and friends in Japan.